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AUTHOR	Emmons, Barbara
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ABSTRACT

This Child Development Associate (CDA) training module provides guidelines for cooperative curriculum planning involving both children and adults. Objectives are stipulated and activities for achieving each objective are suggested in an assessment checklist format. A study guide emphasizes (1) how to include children in the planning process, (2) changing the daily program to include activities observed to have been most effective, (3) encouraging children to talk, (4) encouraging children to listen, (5) reducing threat to children in learning activities, (6) how to deal with children's experiences of failure, (7) teacher and parent participation, (8) staff evaluation, and (9) use of evaluation data in planning. Resources for further study are listed. (Author/RH)

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Competency Based Training Module #4

COOPERATIVE PLANNING

by

Barbara Emmons

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NOTE TO THE INTERN:

This CDA training module has been prepared as a guide for you and your CDA Advisor to help you to develop certain practical skills necessary for your work in an early childhood center. Although it contains many useful ideas, it is not intended to be a self-study program. Many decisions about your training experiences are left up to you and your CDA Advisor. The activities given in this module are "suggested" activities, and should be used if they are appropriate to your learning needs. You or your Advisor may come up with other activities more appropriate for your particular situation, children, or background of experience and training.

Your Advisor will evaluate your performance in each of the objectives. S/he may do so right away on the basis of skills you already have, or s/he may evaluate you after you have done some learning activities, or both. If you think you already have the skills required by some of the objectives, you should ask to be evaluated right away. You may not have to do any activities for some of the objectives. You do, however, have to demonstrate the required skills for your advisor; you cannot just tell s/him that you have the skills. If your advisor has already observed some of the skills before you entered this module, s/he may check you off on those skills without further observation.

When your Advisor has evaluated your performance in an objective area as satisfactory, s/he will initial and date that objective as completed in your copy of this module. When all of the objectives have been initialled, you have completed the requirements of this module and have earned credit. Keep this module as your permanent record of completion, and as a reference to use in your classroom.

As you can see, how fast you are able to complete this module depends on a lot of things: how much time and effort you can put into it; how much help your Advisor can give you; how much experience and training you have already had.

The Arizona/Nevada HSST/CDA Program hopes that you find your participation in CDA a valuable and practical training experience. We would appreciate any suggestions you may have for improvements in the training program and in this module.

COOPERATIVE PLANNING

CDA TRAINING MODULE #4

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This module relates to the following CDA Competencies:*

A. SET UP AND MAINTAIN A SAFE AND HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.
(see item 7)

C. BUILD POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT AND INDIVIDUAL STRENGTH.
(see items 4 and 7)

D. ORGANIZE AND SUSTAIN THE POSITIVE FUNCTIONING OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN A GROUP LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.
(see item 1)

This CDA training module has been produced by the Arizona Child Development Associates training program (Arizona HSST/CDA), of the Pinal County Community College District, Coolidge, Arizona 85228.

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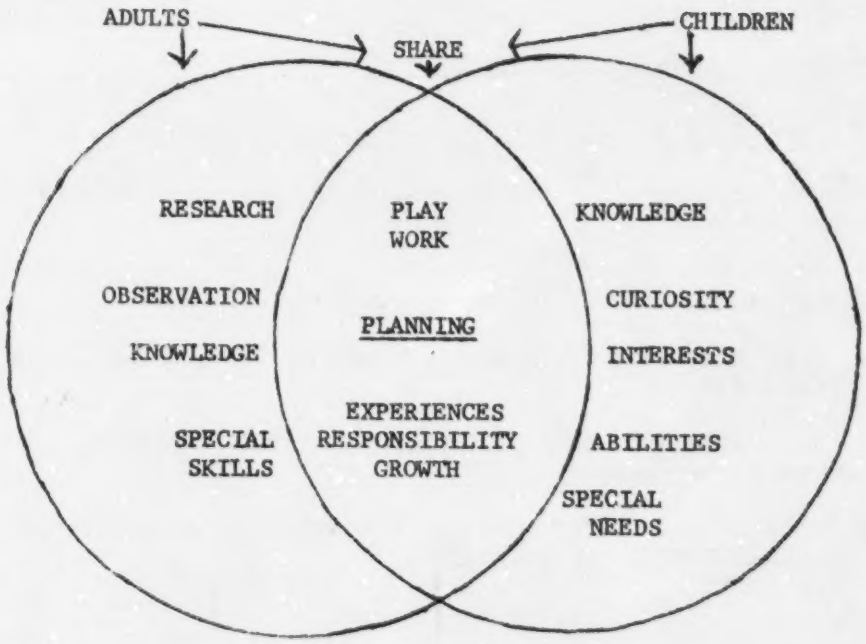
*for reference, see the Arizona HSST/CDA "CDA Assessment"

COOPERATIVE PLANNING

INTRODUCTION



Children bring to the center a great and natural need to know. Why? How? Where? What? This curiosity is the greatest asset the teacher has. It should be encouraged not only by helping children find answers but also by providing experiences which will provoke more questions. The planning of these experiences should be a cooperative effort of children and adults working together.

A child's learning is both richer and easier if he shares in selecting and setting the goals of learning, in planning ways to gain them, and in measuring his own progress toward them. A child learns to solve his life problems only to the degree that he is capable of understanding himself and directing his own actions.

For these reasons the module in Cooperative Planning is an extremely important adjunct to the module in Planned Arrangements and Schedules. The flexibility and awareness discussed in Planned Arrangements and Schedules are very necessary and important components of Cooperative Planning.

One way to work toward meeting the goals of cooperative planning with children is to practice cooperative planning with other staff. As the staff shares their observations of the children and plan and work together, the staff will be setting an example in cooperation for the children to follow.

OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, ASSESSMENT

CDA Intern's Name_____

Date of Entry_____Date of Completion_____

OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
1. The intern will observe the children to determine what activities seem useful and important to them. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	1. Read Section I of the Study Guide. a. Record your observations of one directed and one non-directed activity each day for a week. Example: directed activity - music - non-directed activity - block building. b. Using the indicators in the Study Guide, discuss your findings with your advisor.
2. The intern will provide activities for the children that have been observed as being useful and important to them. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	2. Read Section II of the Study Guide. a. Using your observation notes, make a lesson plan for each type of activity (directed, non-directed) you observed. b. Explain any changes to your advisor.
3. The intern will encourage children to talk about how they feel and how they think about activities which are provided for them. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	3. Read Section III of the Study Guide. a. Tape record your interaction with the children in both a directed and non-directed activity on two different days. b. Discuss the tape with your advisor.
4. The intern will share with the children how he/she feels about activities and will alter activities when necessary to meet the needs of both. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	4. Read Section IV of the Study Guide. a. Record any changes in planned schedules and arrangements for one week. Note the activity which was changed, how it was changed, whose idea it was to make the change. b. Discuss your findings with your advisor.

OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
5. The intern will provide non-competitive activities which will result in success experiences for the children. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	5. Read Section V of the Study Guide. a. Prepare a file card on each child in the center. Note on the card the following: 1) Which activities does the child participate in willingly and frequently? 2) Which activities arouse the most curiosity in the child? 3) In which activities does the child have the most success? 4) Which activities does the child find the most difficult? b. From your observations, can you conclude that some children are more competitive than others? Do some children make activities competitive which you had planned otherwise? How do children feel who consistently come out last in competitive situations?
6. The intern will deal with children's feelings of failure constructively by working out other alternatives with the child. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	6. Read Section VI of the Study Guide. a. Relate to your advisor at least three different examples of incidents in which a child has demonstrated feelings of failure. b. Discuss with your advisor how you and the child dealt with the problem in each case.
7. The intern will share the program planning process with other staff. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	7. Read Section VII of the Study Guide. a. Record the contributions of each staff member in a planning session. b. Discuss with your advisor how these contributions were used in the planning.
8. The intern will meet regularly with other staff to determine whether or not planning is meeting the objectives stated for children. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	8. Read Section VIII of the Study Guide. a. Tape a staff evaluation session to discuss with your advisor. b. Have a staff evaluation session with your advisor present on a day when your advisor has observed activities.

OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
9. The intern will use other staff members' suggestions in meeting the objectives stated for children.	9. Read Section IX of the Study Guide. a. Record the contributions of each staff member in an evaluation session. b. Discuss with your advisor the planned schedule and activities for a day pointing out any activities or changes of activities which are being used as the result of staff evaluation.

ASSESSMENT

_____
date/initial

COOPERATIVE PLANNING

STUDY GUIDE

I. One way to let children share in the planning process is by observing to determine what activities seem useful and important to the children.

   A. These observations should include not only structured and group activities but also free play time both indoors and outdoors.

   B. Some indicators of activities which are useful and important to the children may be:

      1. time spent on the activity

      2. frequency of participation in the activity

      3. willingness to participate in the activity

      4. curiosity aroused by the activity

      5. amount of prior knowledge brought to the activity

II. Those activities which have been observed as being useful and important to the children should be included in the daily program.

   A. The planning process can be made much easier and more meaningful by incorporating the knowledge gained through observation.

      1. Structured activities can be selected which meet the interests and abilities of individual children.

      2. Large and small groups can be organized around children with similar interests and abilities and can provide activities which present both challenge and success.

      3. Interest centers can be rearranged, enlarged upon, or eliminated.

      4. Play grounds can be redesigned and new equipment added as needed.

      5. Daily time schedules can be more realistic in terms of sustaining children's interest and meeting individual needs.

   B. Since observation is an on-going process, planned schedules must sometimes be abandoned or changed to meet the interests of children.

      1. Observation precedes planning.

      2. Continuing observation may require change.

      3. Change requires flexibility.

III. The learning content in any activity is made more meaningful if children are encouraged to talk about it.

   A. How did they <u>feel</u> about the activity?

      1. Did they enjoy it?

2. Was it a hard job?

3. Would they like to do it again?

B. What did they <u>think</u> about the activity?

1. Do they have any questions about it?

2. What did they find out?

3. Could they do it again?

4. Could they do something else like it?

IV. Cooperative planning implies not only that adults listen to children but also that children listen to adults.

A. Some activities which seem very interesting and satisfying to children may be in conflict with what the teacher considers permissable or desirable

EXAMPLE: On a nature walk, Johnny found a caterpillar. After the initial excitement of looking at the caterpillar and the giggling over the funny way his fuzzy body feels crawling on your arm, teacher suggests taking the caterpillar back to the center and putting him in a jar where the children can watch the spinning of the coccoon. The other children think that's a great idea, but that isn't what Johnny wants at all. It's his caterpillar and he wants to squash it!

B. The sensitive teacher will not only be aware of the differences of opinion but will also be able to express her/his own feelings.

EXAMPLE: Caught up in the excitement with the other children over the prospect of watching the caterpillar's metamorphisis, she/he will not over look Johnny's unhappiness with the whole project. When she/he questions Johnny and finds out that he wants to squash the caterpillar, she/he can say to him, "I'm sorry Johnny. I can't let you do that. You see, I think all things in nature are important, and I wouldn't feel good about seeing this lovely black fuzzy caterpillar become nothing but a lump of green goo."

C. The teacher will attempt to resolve the conflict by offering alternatives.

EXAMPLE: "I know you other children want to take the caterpillar back to the center; but Johnny found the caterpillar, and he doesn't want to do that. Perhaps Johnny would like to turn his caterpillar loose on a bush since I've told him how I feel. Later on if someone else finds a caterpillar, we may take that one to the center."

V. The child will cooperate in the learning process only so long as he is not threatened by it.

A. Competition to children usually means that someone is a winner and someone is a loser.

1. The child who is not sure of his ability may refuse to try for fear of being the loser.

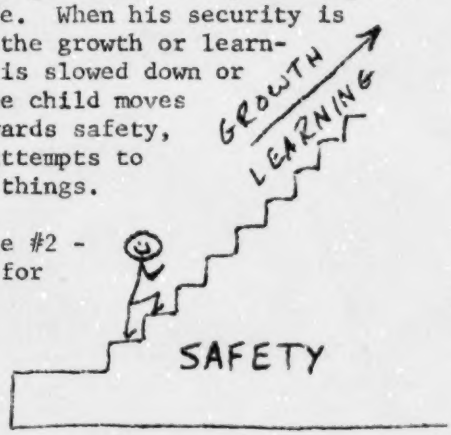
2. The child who trys and loses may not try again.

3. The child may also refuse to compete because his culture values cooperation above competition.

B. The child who achieves success at a task is usually willing to repeat it and to go on to other more difficult tasks.

EXAMPLE: Maslow's growth theory states that a child is willing to go forward only so long as he feels safe. When his security is threatened, the growth or learning process is slowed down or stopped. The child moves backward towards safety, abandoning attempts to explore new things.

(See also Module #2 - Health and Safety for Maslow's chart.)



C. Each child approaches a task differently, and the feelings he has about the task determine his "frustration tolerance".

1. Important - not important.

2. Useful - not useful.

3. Interesting - not interesting.

4. Can do - cannot do.

VI. Children will experience feelings of failure; and when they do, these feelings must be dealt with constructively. (We do not define children's failures, but we do need to recognize when children feel failure and deal with it in their terms.)

A. The child should be encouraged to talk about his feelings of failure and be made a part of the planning for change.

B. There are several alternatives which might be discussed with the child.

1. Developmental - Are there other activities the child needs to master before he can successfully complete the one which he tried and could not do?

EXAMPLE: Sue has just attempted to follow Sally across the balance beam in its narrow position. After her first two steps, Sue falls off. She tries again, falls again, and begins to cry in frustration. Teacher comes over and, after comforting

Sue, asks what happened. "I fell." "How did you fall?" "I got on that old board and just felled off." "Did the beam wobble?" "No, my foots just wouldn't stay on it." "Maybe the beam was too narrow for your feet right now. If I make it wider, would you try it again?" Sue may or may not be ready to try again "right now". If not, teacher should go ahead and place the beam in the broad position and later in the day initiate beam walking activity with a small group which includes Sue.

2. Corrective - Are there other approaches the child could take which would lead him to success?

   EXAMPLE: Teacher is observing in the block building area. Greg has been working there for quite sometime trying to build a very complicated tower. Each time it falls, Greg starts over again with the same base. In the meantime, a frown is growing on his face. Teacher joins him. "How's it going, Greg?" "I'm mad." "What about?" "Oh, this dumb tower won't stay up." "Would you like some help?" "Nope." "Well, what do you think is making it fall?" "Don't know." "Maybe you should check the base." "Why?" "Well, the block you are using might not be smooth or it might not be large enough to hold a tower as big as you want to build." "Block's smooth." "Oh?" "Maybe I'll get a bigger one." At this point teacher can move out of the situation. Greg has found a new approach and will probably succeed. When he does, teacher can return and praise him.

3. Acceptance - Is this a task you must help the child understand and accept as being one he cannot do?

   EXAMPLE: The task is auditory discrimination. Phillip, who has a hearing loss, has been watching the other children and wants to try. He cannot pair the sounds. Teacher may explain to him that the sounds in these cans are very soft so he cannot hear them. She might point out other sounds which he can hear.

4. Substitution - Are there similar activities which would satisfy the child's initial interest and in which the child could be successful?

   EXAMPLE: Several children are cutting and pasting. Jean joins them at the table but she is unable to use the scissors. She starts a fight with the girl next to her by grabbing the pictures the other girl cut. Teacher intervenes and after explaining that those are Gail's pictures to paste, teacher encourages Jean to tear the pictures she wants and then paste them. The new activity is enough like what the other children are doing to satisfy Jean.

VII. The program planning process should be shared by the total teaching staff and interested parents.

A. Discuss your observations of children with one another.

1. The total knowledge gained will be increased by the number of people observing.

2. Observation skills will be increased by the number of times they are exercised and shared.

3. These discussions must be kept confidential. Remember confidentiality is a part of professionalism.

4. Encourage parents to observe in your center and share their observations with the staff.

B. Base your planning on the knowledge gained from each staff member's observations and those of parents.

1. If there are conflicting opinions, respect the observations of others.

2. Use these differences of opinions to provide the children with a wider range or selection of activities.

C. Children understand cooperativeness better when they see adults accepting changes of plans initiated by other adults in response to children's needs.

VII. Staff evaluation is a necessary part of planning and should occur at regular intervals.

A. Ideally, the staff should meet at the end of each program day to discuss the success or failure of the activities provided for the children.

B. Observations discussed should include both directed and non-directed activities as well as individual children.

1. Staff not involved in directing an activity should, when possible, observe and be prepared to share observation since it is sometimes difficult to both direct and observe.

2. It is also important to discuss how the person directing the activity felt about it.

C. Care should be taken that these staff meetings are conducted in a spirit of cooperativeness with the welfare of the children as their main objective.

1. Discussions will not center around adult personalities.

2. Most importantly, discussions will be kept confidential.

IX. The shared knowledge gained from staff evaluations should be used in future planning of children's activities.

A. Staff usually will cooperate in the evaluation process only so long as they feel their opinions are valued.

1. One way to show value of another's opinion is to listen.

2. Another way to show value of another's opinion is to use his ideas.

B. Observation, planning, and evaluation are a continuing process which allows for differences of opinion and which results in good programs for children when cooperation exists between adults as well as between adults and children.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Baker, Katherine Read. IDEAS THAT WORK WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. Washington, D.C., National Association for Education of Young Children, 1972. (Suggested Reading: "Teachers of Young Children Need Basic Inner Qualities", pp. 25-27.)

2. Maslow, Abraham H. TOWARD A PSYCHOLOGY OF BEING, 2nd ed., New York, D. Van Nostrand Co., 1968. (Suggested Reading: Chapter 4, pp. 44-59.)

3. Murphy, Lois B. and Ethel M. Leeper. CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING. #9 Caring for Children series, Washington, D.C., DHEW Pub. #(OHD) 75-1034.

4. Pitcher, Evelyn Goodenough and others. HELPING YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN. 2nd ed., Columbus, Ohio, Chas A. Merrill Pub. Co., 1974. (Suggested Reading: "The Aims of the Curriculum", pp. 7-9.)

5. Read, Katherine H. THE NURSERY SCHOOL: A HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS LABORATORY. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders Co., 1971. (Suggested Reading: Chapter 13, pp. 177-187-"Professional Growth Experiences, pp. 62-65.)